

1965 III. 25.

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

Committee on
International Relations

International Symposium:

MARX AND THE WESTERN WORLD

(Notre Dame, January 18-21, 1966)

Though many non-Communist scholars have in recent years devoted themselves to a study of Marx's own thought, they usually have approached this subject as an antecedent of the ideology which has become the guiding principle of the "Communist World" as opposed to the so-called "Western World." Accordingly, there has been the tendency to overlook the fact that Marx himself was a "Western" thinker just as Plato, Rousseau, Hegel or Kierkegaard were, and that each single element of his thought is rooted in aspects of the occidental tradition. In consequence, the impact of Marx's thought on the non-Communist world-outlook is often underestimated. Ideas are rejected simply because Marx, viewed as the precursor of Lenin and Stalin, was the first explicitly to formulate them. Ideas and realities of the Communist World which can be traced back to Marx's thought are often criticized though, under a different name, they have become an integral element of the "Western World;" and, more generally, Marx's thought is treated as if it were something utterly foreign to Western tradition - a tendency which significantly hampers many a fruitful argument with Communists.

Moreover, the dialogue between the Communist and the non-Communist worlds, a dialogue which is as necessary as it is difficult, as well as the articulation of an adequate self-understanding of the "Western World" in contrast to the "Communist World," increasingly depends upon the interpretation of Marx's own thought as opposed to the thought of Engels, the Social Democrats, Lenin, Stalin, and other Communist leaders. As some recent Communist publications indicate, there is even among Communists a tendency to go back to and to seek new inspiration in Marx's original thought. At the same time, since World War II, the "Western World" too has witnessed a new interest in Marx's original thought, in particular in Marx's early writings. More recently, some European scholars have begun to criticize Communism in terms of ideas developed by Marx himself before 1845, and have, on the other hand, begun to criticize certain aspects of their own world in terms of the same ideas without thereby in any way advocating Communism. This dissociation of Marx's original thought from contemporary Communism is by no means unproblematic, it is true; but there can be no doubt that it is about to become an important element both of our understanding of ourselves and of our discussion with Communist thinkers.

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To "reoccidentalize" Marx, to denizen him in the tradition of which he is a part and to contribute to the prospective dialogue, the Committee on International Relations at the University of Notre Dame proposes to organize a symposium centering around four problems:

- a) Which elements of Marx's original thought have become integral parts of what "Western" tradition and why?
- b) Which elements of Marx's original thought did not become parts of Western thought, though perhaps they would have deserved to?
- c) Which elements of Marx's original thought have been neglected by Communists and why?
- d) How much of Western criticism of Communism, if adequately understood, turns out to be an implicit criticism of the Western World and its tradition?

It is obvious that a symposium of this nature can be truly fruitful only if it succeeds in gathering scholars from all over the world. The philosophical thought of Marx has been most extensively studied in Europe; the political implications of Marx's thought emerge most clearly in the minds of those living in the United States; Latin America may offer important insights into what is dead and what is living in Marx's thought. In addition, it would seem imperative to invite scholars from major areas of the globe and from Communist countries who are willing to enter a fruitful discussion, thus enlarging the encounter of Europe, the United States and Latin America to a truly world-wide dialogue.

Nicholas Lobkowitz

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Notre Dame, Indiana

Committee on
International Relations

March 25, 1965

Professor G. Lukacs
V. Belgrad rkp. 2
Budapest, Hungary

Dear Professor Lukacs:

May I invite you in the name of the Committee on International Relations at the University of Notre Dame to deliver a lecture on "Marx's Concept of Freedom." Your address would be part of a symposium, "Marx and the Western World," to be held at Notre Dame on January 18-21, 1966. The Committee has invited to this Conference scholars from most parts of the world, including Germany, England, Italy, France, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, and Yugoslavia. The enclosed prospectus contains information on the general purposes and scope of the Conference.

We would be happy if you would be able to participate in this scholarly meeting. We would pay you a modest honorarium of \$250.00, your travel expenses, and of course you would be our guest while at Notre Dame.

I would like to ask you to submit your paper by December 1, because we would like to mimeograph all papers before the Conference. The papers presented at the Conference will be published in a volume by the end of 1966.

I hope that you will be able to participate in our symposium and remain with best regards,

Sincerely yours,

MTA FIL INT
Lukacs

Nicholas Lobkowitz

Nicholas Lobkowitz
Associate Professor of
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NL:SS

University of Notre Dame
Notre Dame, Indiana

Committee on
International Relations

den 16. April 1965

Prof. Dr. G. Lukács
V. Belgrad-rkp. 2
Budapest

Hochverehrter Professor Lukács,

herzlichen Dank für Ihren Brief v. 9. d. M. Daß Sie uns absagen, ist mehr als traurig; doch verstehe ich natürlich gut Ihre Gründe.

Seien Sie mir nun, bitte, nicht böse, wenn ich noch einmal "nachstoße" und Sie frage, ob Sie nicht wenigstens bereit wären, einen Artikel beizutragen, der dann im Band, der die proceedings der Tagung enthält, veröffentlicht würde. Sie werden sich erinnern, daß ich Sie um einen Vortrag über Marxens Freiheitsbegriff bat. Über dieses Thema ist gewiß viel herumgequatscht worden; doch begegnete ich niemals einer Untersuchung, die das Zusammenspiel bzw. die Zwiefalt von Marxens histor. Determinismus und andererseits von Marxens Überzeugung, daß die Geschichte ihren Ursprung im Menschen hat und gleichsam vom Menschen "vollzogen wird", befriedigend behandelt. Auch zur Frage, daß Marx unter 'Freiheit' etwas ganz anderes versteht als die Willkür, gerade das zu tun, was einem einfällt, eine Problematik, die ständig die Auseinandersetzung zwischen der "westlichen" und der kommunistischen Welt erschwert, ist selten beleuchtet worden. Und ich kann mir eigentlich niemand vorstellen, der diese Problematik so darstellen könnte, wie gerade Sie. Vielleicht irre ich mich - doch hatte ich immer den Eindruck, daß Ihre Marx-Deutung ständig um die Spannung von Freiheit (Fichte) und Rationalität (Hegel-Marx) bzw. um die Verwirklichung beider in der Gesellschaft (Marx-Lenin) herumschwebt. Kurz, wenn Ihre Studien zu Marxens Ontologie ein Nebenprodukt erlaubt, in dem Sie im eben angedeuteten Sinne zum "Ost-West"-Gespräch beitragen könnten, wäre ich Ihnen mehr als dankbar. Allerdings möchte ich Sie in keiner Weise drängen; ein Gesamtdarstellung von Marxens Ontologie würde zum besagten Gespräch am meisten beitragen. (Was den Termin betrifft: Herbst 1966 wäre völlig hinreichend).

Und da ich schon am Schreiben bin, möchte ich Sie auch gleich bitten, ob Sie vielleicht einen Namen "from behind the Iron Curtain" nennen können, der uns entgangen ist. Wir haben eingeladen: Kołakowski, Petrović, V. I. Il'enkov und aus der CSSR K. Kosík, dessen "Dialektik des Konkreten" ich neben Ihren und vielleicht noch Kolakowski's Schriften als eine der wichtigsten betrachte, die in den letzten 20 Jahren erschienen. Ich dachte noch an W. R. Beyer, aber erstens schrieb er nur über Hegel und zweitens ist er unendlich bissig. Fällt Ihnen vielleicht ein Namen ein - jemand, der bei der Tagung über Marxens Begriff der Freiheit sprechen könnte (was allerdings Ihren Beitrag zu diesem Thema ganz sicher nicht überflüssig machen würde)?

Mein Brief ist schon zu lang geworden. Verzeihen Sie, bitte, die Tippfehler, durch das ewige Diktieren habe ich fast verlernt, selber zu schreiben.

MTA FIL INT
Lukács Arch.

Mit sehr herzlichen Grüßen
Ihr ergebener

Nikolaus Lobkowitz
(Nikolaus Lobkowitz)